Il: Gondale E-S (1954, 1962) 1963 OI20 Tiwi OI20

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[colors appearing in original:
Hair - left: white, center stripe: red, right: yellow.
Face - left: unpainted, center stripe and dots: yellow,
right: red. -- Analyst.]

[Cover]

Il: Goodale E-5 (1954, 1962) 1963 OI20 Tiwi OI20

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COVER: A man in the group of Tiwi natives living on Melville Island, in the Timor Sea, paints his face while participating in the Tiwi's annual, three-day *Kulama* ceremony, which is named after a toxic yam. The Tiwi who still adhere to tradition believe that great powers for good or evil dwell in *Kulama* yams, and that one must participate in their ritual preparation if one is to benefit from these powers. For those young Tiwi men and women who undergo the six years of instruction in the ritual, it represents a formal initiation into adulthood. Dr. Jane C. Goodale discusses this ceremony in the article that begins on page 10.

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[Title Page]

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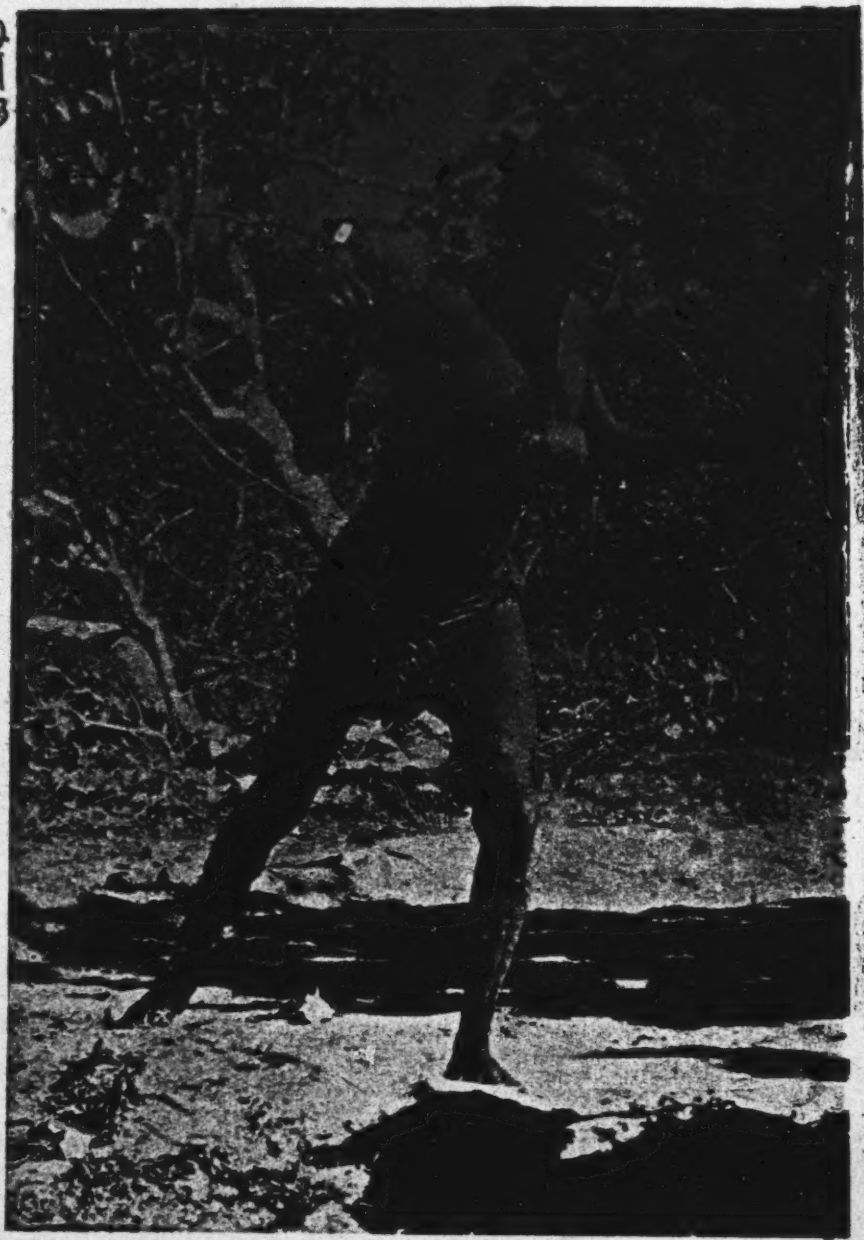

Tiwi native on Melville Island expresses a grievance in an original song during the annual three-day Kulama ceremony.

[P.10]

Il: Goodale E-5 (1954, 1962) 1963 OI20 Tiwi OI20-

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Qualifications for Adulthood

[P. II, (A)]

11:Goodale E-5 (1954, 1962) 1963 CE20 Tiwi CE20

Tiwi invoke the power of a yam

By JANE C. GOODALE

IN 1912 SIR BALDWIN SPENCER, a professor of biology at the University of Melbourne, visited Melville Island, in the Timor Sea. There he observed a Tiwi tribal ceremony in which a number of young boys and girls participated in the ritual preparation of a species of yam the Tiwi called *Kulama*. Spencer wrote of this ceremony, "initiation of young men [and women] on Melville Island is intimately associated with what is known as a yam ceremony." This statement is particularly noteworthy, for, in 1954, when I visited the Tiwi for the first time and witnessed the annual *Kulama* ceremony, no initiates took part. The ceremony, however, was still being performed with no significant changes in the complex ritual procedures that Spencer had described more than forty years before.

That the *Kulama* ceremony can and does take place without initiates does not mean that Spencer was wrong to consider it an important part of initiation into adult life. It does mean that many of the new generation of Tiwi believe that such participation cannot prepare them adequately for a way of life that has been radically changed by contact with Western culture during the past fifty years.

In order to understand what this ceremony means to those who still perform it, one must first understand what the Tiwi consider to be adulthood. The Tiwi, now about a thousand in number, have lived for untold centuries on Melville and Bathurst Islands, which are situated thirty miles north of Darwin, the capital city of Australia's Northern Territory. The islands and surrounding waters are well supplied with food, and fresh water is plentiful. Economically and technically the Tiwi have been remarkably conservative. They came to the islands as hunters and gatherers of wild food, using crude chipped stone axes, digging sticks, simple wooden spears, and hunting dogs, and found that little else was needed to exploit the natural resources and to provide themselves with a stable, varied, and adequate diet. With the exception of the wallaby, the land animals of the two islands were small and nocturnal and could simply be collected during the day with little physical effort or skill. The few skills that were necessary were identifying tracks to find game and chopping out or digging up the sleeping animals. Young boys and girls were taught these techniques, since there was no essential sexual division of labor in food-collecting. Boys, however, re-

TIWI NATIVE on Melville Island expresses a grievance in an original song during the annual three-day *Kulama* ceremony.

[P. 11, (B)]

11:Goodale E-5 (1964, 1967) 1963 CE20 Tiwi CE20

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SHARK DANCE is among traditional, imitative figures that are performed during ritual preparation of toxic *Kalawa* yams.

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ceived additional instruction in spear-fishing and birding, while girls were taught more intensively to locate and identify edible plants. The children, as a result, were generally independent economically in their early teens, by

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[883]

which time the girls were already married. Young males contributed to their parents' larder and to other households, but did not marry and acquire households until they were more than thirty years old. Even now, this late mar-

[183]

riage age obtains in theory, but not always in practice.

885 THUS, to the Tiwi, economic independence and/or marriage did not alone signify adulthood. The Tiwi adult was intellectually, rather than physiologically, a mature individual who was expected to join actively in the non-economic affairs of the community. An adult was also expected to be almost entirely responsible for his own health, wealth, and future prospects. This included attaining success in hunting and in war and, for the men, in wife-collecting. If an adult became ill or was injured or, as a Tiwi would say, was unlucky in the pursuit of life's benefits, he alone was responsible for not behaving as an adult should.

884 The annual *Kalawa* ceremony, held by each community in April at the end of the rainy season, was a most important event to insure individual success. Although a collec-

[P. 11, (C)]
[Text continues on p. 12(C)]

11:Goodale E-5 (1954, 1962) 1963 CH20 Tiwi CH20

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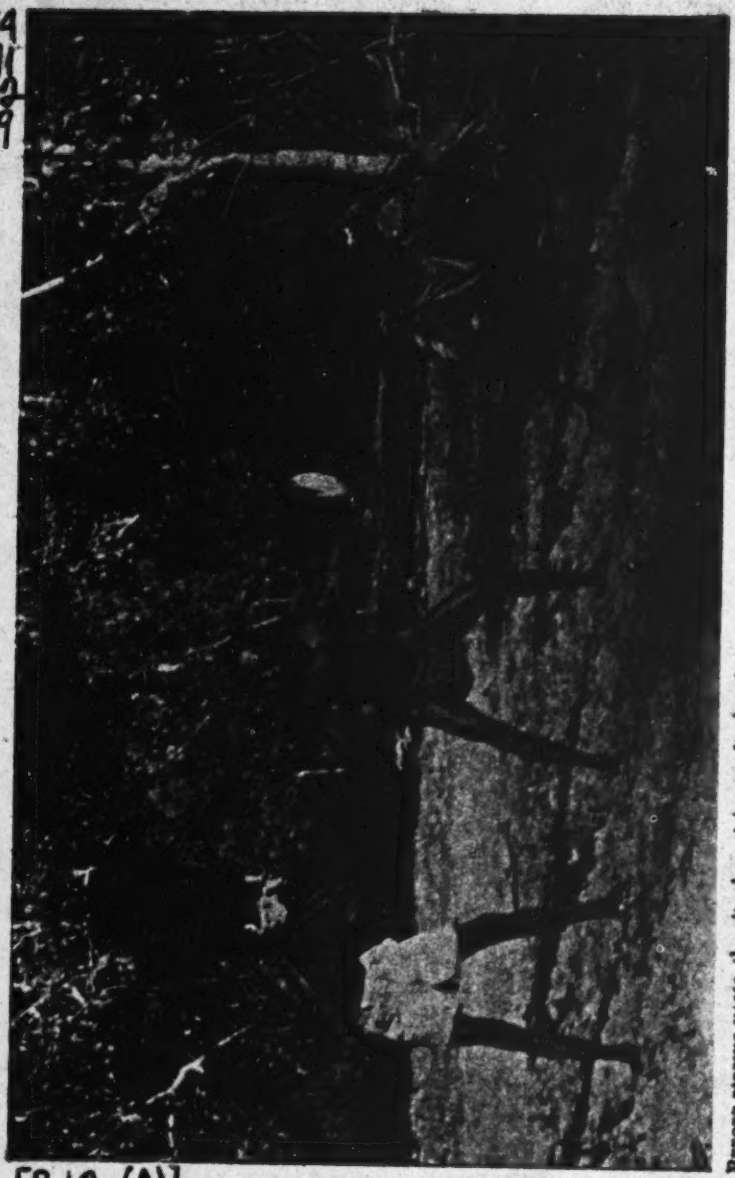

Before digging yams, the ritual participants dip hands into white paint and put it around eyes to insure acute vision.

[P. 12, (A)]

11;Goodale E-8 (1954,1962) 1963 CE20 Tivi CE20

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Before sacred rabbit, the ritual participants dip hands into white paint and put it around eyes to insure acute vision.

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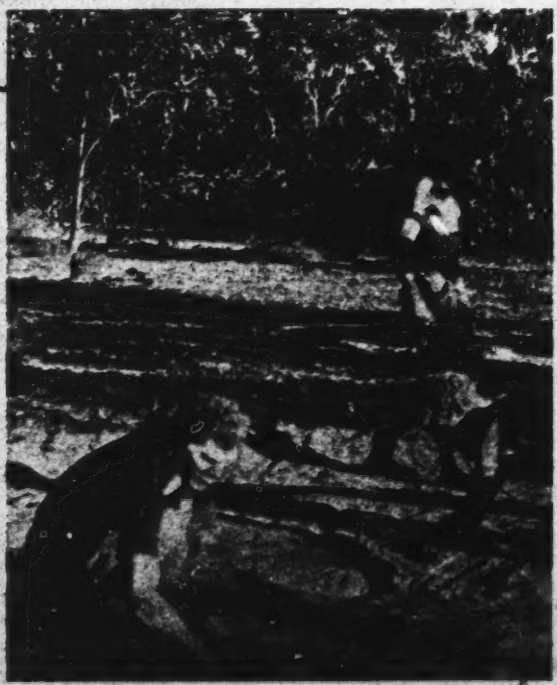

Ceremonial race is prepared by clearing ground of grass, sticks, and stones. Participants will sing and dance there.

[P. 12, (B)]

11:Goodale E-6 (1964, 1962) 1963 CE20 Tiwi CE20

884 tive, community ceremony, its benefits accrued only to individual participants, and then only to those who had followed the complex procedures correctly. Thus it was vitally important to every Tiwi individual, male or female, to receive instruction in the *Kulama* ritual before being considered a fully adult member of the tribe. The instruction period lasted six years, during which the initiates, among other requirements, had to participate actively in six *Kulama* rituals. Following this training, the individuals were considered responsible adults by other members of the tribe, but only through continued participation in the ritual could that condition be maintained.

[178] TODAY the ritual is still performed by those who believe in it, and it will probably continue until the last initiated Tiwi dies, or until the underlying meaning is totally lost and is replaced by ideas of how to be successful that have their origins in Western thought.

[962] [958] The ceremony itself takes three days to complete and centers on the preparation of a toxic variety of yam, the *Kulama*. To make this yam edible, it must first be soaked. It is then baked, mashed, and again soaked for a time in fresh water. Even after the poisons have been removed by this elaborate process, an extremely bitter taste remains. The Tiwi say they never eat the yam except at the conclusion of the *Kulama* ceremony. Those who believe in the [778] ritual say the yam has tremendous power for causing good or evil, and thus one must handle the yam carefully during the preparation, speak to it softly, sing to it at times, and always treat it with respect. The individual absorbs the power of the yam by touching it, by rubbing the body with it, and finally by eating it. All these steps are ritualized. [963] Special digging sticks are made, and, contrary to the usual practice of having the women gather plants, only men

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 13(B)...Ed.]
[P. 12, (C)]

11:Goodale E-5 (1964, 1967) 1963 CK20 Tiwi CK20

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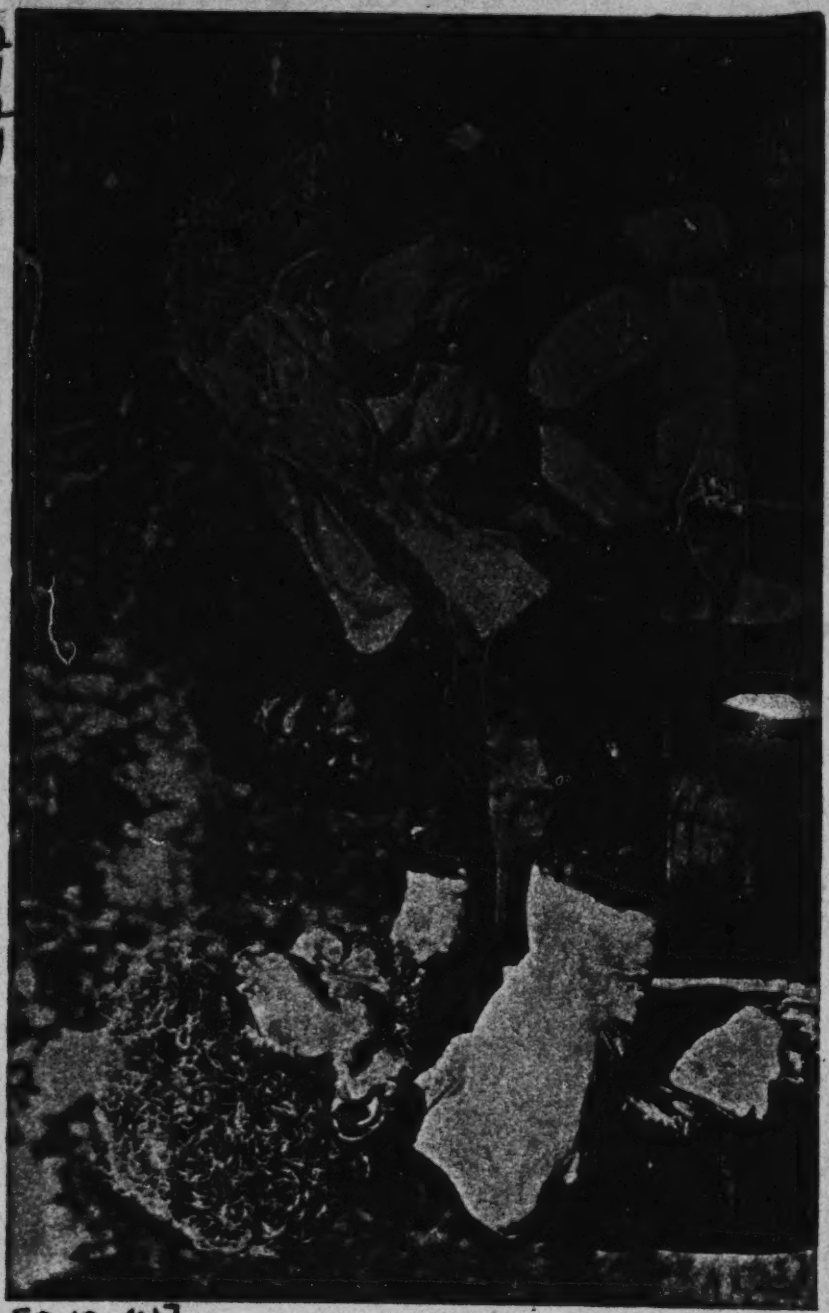

Ronnie rubs into the hair is supposed to prevent illness, and daubing it on the arms and legs wards off broken bones.

[P. 13, (A)]

are allowed to dig the yam. A special dance area, or ceremonial ring, is cleared on the ground and a special cooking fire is built in its center. On each of the three ceremonial days the participants paint themselves in specified ways with ochre. During the evening of each day, while the yams are soaking or cooking, the male participants, singly or together, walk slowly counterclockwise around the ceremonial fire, beating sticks together as an accompaniment to specially composed songs. At times the wives, who remain outside the ring, sing with the men, or they may join their husbands in traditional dances that imitate various aspects of the natural world around them.

The songs are a vital part of the ritual. They must be newly composed for the occasion and may relate to any event or abstract idea the composer chooses. The songs often deal with injustices the singer has experienced in the past year, about which he wishes to register an "official" complaint:

"There was a funeral,
You went first, I came after.
Old people came in first.
I was late because I had a *Kulama*.
Why didn't you wait for me?"

or

"When Dory have baby girl
The old man said, 'That's for you.'
Dory, my mother-in-law, she burns me.
Dory doesn't know the old people way.
I would like to kill her."

Others may be in the nature of news reports, in which the listeners are informed of anything interesting that may have happened to the singer during the preceding year. For instance, the composer of the following song had just

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P.10,(A)--(June 1957)
[P.18,(B)]

884

Grazes are set in the center of cleared area to hold wound of sticks and pieces of sawhill that will be burned here.

[P-13, (c)]

11:Goodale E-6 (1954, 1962) 1963 CE20 Thri CE20

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YAMS TO BE USED in *Kalama* ceremony are retrieved from a fresh-water pool in which they had been soaked overnight.

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[177]

[539]

For instance,
The composer of the following song had just returned from Brisbane, where he and a group of eight other aborigines had performed dances in honor of Queen Elizabeth's 1954 visit to Australia:

"The Queen was talking in England,
'I would like to see a blackfellow dance.'
When I was in Brisbane, the Queen said,
'I would like to meet a black boy!'
And I went up.
King Philip, he had a good look at me.
He was watching a lot as I danced.
I was singing into a loud-speaker."

[173]

Some songs are historic in nature, retelling an event that must be kept alive according to the traditions of the tribe. One such composition recalls the Japanese attack on Darwin during World War II:

[539]

"An enemy plane flies low over Melville Island.
The men on the ground, at the word 'Standby,'
Shoot it down with a cannon."

The children of the singer are often song subjects. This first example describes how the children behaved in one of their father's dreams.

[539]

"My children have gone to the other side
of the island.
But they must come back as they are hard up
for tobacco.
My children have now come back.
I know this for they have taken the tobacco
which I have held in my hand."

or

"My children will wear clothes and shoes.
They will go to school and learn to write."

All the songs have the same chanting tune, which is associated with the *Kalama* ceremony, and the composer must fit his words to the set meter of the chant. In many cases this requires using archaic words that are no longer a

[P. 14, (1)]

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YOUNG GIRL AND BOY accompany fathers as men bring yams from pool to the ceremonial ring. There the yams will be

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[181]

part of Tiwi speech. Poetic license in pronunciation and syllabification often occurs. The Tiwi have high regard for the linguistic ability needed to become a good Tiwi composer and singer, and instruction in the art of song composition and delivery is given to the initiates. Each initiate must perform in the *Kulama* before he can be considered a "graduate." According to my Tiwi informants, this requirement is the hardest of all, and it is also the reason for there being no set age for initiation. The old people are said to watch the young, and when the observers consider them mature enough, they swoop down upon their choices "like chicken hawks, without warning"—as the Tiwi say—and start the initiates along the path to adulthood.

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[171]

As far as I know, the *Kulama* ceremony has no parallel elsewhere in Australia. And there are many interesting questions that come to mind concerning the origin of the *Kulama* as it exists today. For instance, why is instruction in the preparation of a poisonous yam that is not part of the daily diet considered so important for initiation into adulthood? What is the origin of the idea that a yam has power over good and evil, and health and sickness? Why is such prominence accorded a yam in what is principally a hunting and gathering society?

[360]

[824]

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Any answers to these questions must be highly speculative, for the origin of the ceremony and its development lie in the unrecorded history of the Tiwi. However, I believe the following statements may well be valid.

[362]

Instruction in the natural resources of the land was considered vital to becoming an adult. Because the *Kulama* yam is poisonous and is not widely distributed, it was never part of the regular diet, but it could be used in economic emergencies if properly prepared. Instruction in its preparation was therefore extremely important as a potential survival measure. However, since the Tiwi live in a favorable environment, it is highly probable that such emergencies were very rare, so it was considered expedient to hold annual instruction periods. Because knowledge of

[See P. 15(A) for other part of caption and picture --ANALYST]

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Young girl and boy accompany fathers as men bring yams from pool to the ceremonial ring. There the yams will be

[Fig. 15 (A)]

baked by placing them atop pieces of anthill heated to a glow by wood fire, then covering the yams with hot earth.

MAN LIGHTS FIRE beneath chunks of anthill. When the pieces are red-hot, burning wood below them will be brushed away.

11:Goodale F-6 (1954, 1963) 1963 CEIO Tiwi CEIO

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[p. 15, (8)]

FATHER PAINTS GIRL to show how it would be done if she were to be initiated. Although no children of group were considered ready, ceremony was held to maintain benefits thought to accrue to the Tiwi who had undergone initiation.

11-Goodale F-5 (1954, 1957) 1963 CEBD Tiwi CEBD

11:Goodale E-5 (1954, 1962) 1963 CE20 Tiwi CE20

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HOT EARTH over baked *Kulama* yams is removed. Yams that are to be eaten at end of ritual must be resoaked in water.

[824]

SOME COOKED YAMS are cut, peeled, and mashed. Water and paint are then added. Yams are always handled with respect.

[851]
[50]

MEN RUB BLACK on bodies to insure health, then do so to the uninitiated young, whose health is paternal responsibility.

[P. 16, (A)]

884 194 the technique had to be made meaningful to the initiates, the lifesaving qualities of this famine food were explained as health-giving powers. A ceremony accompanied by song and dance was certainly a dramatic and effective means of impressing the initiates in preparation methods. The ritual [180] served another purpose as well: because traveling is so difficult during the rainy season, each household is isolated from the others. The *Kulama* ritual follows this period, and it is natural to expect a reunion to be an occasion to exchange news, settle differences, and tell stories or sing songs that keep traditions alive.

885 MUCH harder to account for is the Tiwi idea of adulthood. That every adult is solely responsible for his own health and wealth, and that success in life depends entirely on personal behavior and industry, are ideals [171] strangely similar to those that underlie the American way of life, despite the great gulf between the aboriginal culture and our own. But it is not at all surprising that the Tiwi 177 have a great sympathy for much of Western civilization. Many hold the same views as the *Kulama* singer quoted earlier in this article who saw his children wearing clothes [181] and shoes and going to school to learn to write, for this is the Tiwi's contemporaneous idea of success in a way of life introduced to them only a few short years ago.

[114] Early in the summer of 1962 I revisited the Tiwi for two weeks. Although I knew that the Tiwi desired schooling and training in European ways of life and would seize any such opportunity afforded them, I was hardly prepared for the tremendous changes that had taken place during the eight years that had elapsed since my first visit.

[871] Three months after the *Kulama* ceremony of 1954, a government school was opened. Now all the Tiwi children go to school, and some who have finished the six-year program in the government school have received subsequent training as teaching or nursing assistants. Some others have had "on-the-job" training in various activities connected with a large-scale forestry project that has been started on Melville Island. In fact, all the able-bodied Tiwi men and women are currently employed, and their tasks bear little or no relation to their old life in the bush.

It is perhaps significant—but to me not at all surprising—that I did not hear a single real complaint from the Tiwi regarding their new manner of living. They seem to like it and are anticipating bigger and better things (in the [224] Western sense) for their children. Hunting has become [868] a week-end diversion and the children receive little or no real instruction in that traditional skill.

178 784 SOME aspects of Tiwi life are slow to die, however. Most of the old taboos, the observance of which was considered necessary in the past in order to insure health and wealth, are still observed, although at least one teen-ager expressed doubt that the taboos had any actual effect on the outcome of one's life. Western medicine and public 1977 health practices are fast replacing belief in the *Kulama*. 884 During the past eight years only three men have begun the six years of training for *Kulama* initiation, and some of the older men no longer participate in the ceremony. However, as long as even a small number of Tiwi believe in the *Kulama*, the ritual will survive, but I doubt that it will for long.

000 NEAR END of *Kulama* ceremony, performer, although hoarse and tired, must continue to sing until late in the night.
[P. 16, (B)]

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Near end of Kulama ceremony, performer, although hoarse and tired, must continue to sing until late in the night.

[colors appearing in original:

Body - light purple with white.

Hair and beard - left: yellow, center stripe: red, right: white.

Red across nose and upper cheek. -- Analyst.]

[p. 19]

[For a discussion of the Kulama ceremony of initiation into adulthood see category 116, pp. 10-17.]